



THE CLUB CAR



Bulletin 687

Pacific Locomotive Association, Inc.

www.ncry.org

November 2020

December Photographers Special - Ride the 7 for the 1744!



Photo by Chris Hauf

The #7 Skookum freight train.

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The Pacific Locomotive Association and the Niles Canyon Railway invite you to take part in a railfan photographer's special on December 5th and 6th, 2020 to benefit the restoration of recently acquired Southern Pacific M-6 Steam Locomotive #1744. Tickets are \$150 per person, per day, and additional donations are most welcome. Tickets are available online at: <https://www.ncry.org/ride/ride-the-7-for-the-1744> and ALL proceeds of this event will go directly to the restoration of the 1744.

For more details and information on the SP #1744 project, see PLA's steam website at <http://plasteam.ncry.org>.

Both days will feature a historically accurate period freight train, pulled by 2-4-4-2 Columbia River Belt Line #7, known as the "Skookum" while ticketholders ride in a separate chase train pulled by SP 1195, a vintage SW900. Starting in Sunol at 9 am, there will be multiple photo-runby's throughout the canyon in exclusive locations. Time permitting,

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OUR MISSION: To be an operating railroad museum for standard gauge railroading, past, present and future, with emphasis on the Western United States and special emphasis on Northern California

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Remembering Warren Benner

On Thursday, 8 October 2020, long time PLA Life Member and volunteer, Warren Benner passed away. He would have been 90 in December. Warren was a contributor as far back as the early 70's, and joined in 1993.

Warren spent most of his volunteer time working with fellow craftsmen Carlo Borlandelli and John Senf on the PLA's collection of passenger cars. There isn't a car in the collection that doesn't have their fingerprints on it somewhere. Carlo described Warren as the "Spark Plug" that ignited various projects. Warren could identify a need and fill it. When the PLA needed more open cars to supplement "The Bones", Warren and his gang identified some flatcar candidates and modified them to carry passengers, and built roofs or other provisions to keep the sun and rain off of the passengers.

Chief among Warren's accomplishments were the 6719 "Bar Car" conversion, and the M-200 Motor Car interior restoration. Warren and gang spent around 2 years on the M-200 removing weather damaged interior panels, sealing the leaks, and replacing the interior panels and ceiling. When the 6719 ex-baggage car was obtained, the previous owner had converted it into an apartment, complete with living room, bedroom, kitchen and bathroom. All of that had to be removed to the walls before the generator room, 2 restrooms and snack bar could be fabricated and installed.

In addition to working on passenger cars, Warren outfitted most of the box cars used for storage with shelves. He was very resourceful and knew people



Photo by Patrice Warren

Warren Benner at work.

who had storage racks or other materials they wanted to donate, and he often donated material himself. Warren built out the "Tool Room" at the West end of the Back Shop and built the storage and work rooms above that. Warren spearheaded building the storage sheds located North of the Lube Shed at the West end of Brightside and the little shack that became the Steam Shop Office.

When working on car restorations, Warren recognized that many steps were wasted cutting material in the Car Shop, then hauling it out to the car being restored. He developed the "Green Car" (carpenter shop car) so that it could be coupled up to any car being restored. Materials could be prepared in the Green Car, then walked through the door at the end of the car to the car being restored, at the same level, without ever going outside.

Warren loved his work and loved Brightside. Carlo told me that interested people would often wander in the open front gate in the old days and find themselves at the shops. If Warren saw them, he would answer questions and often take the visitors all over the yard for a tour. He tried to make the yard a little oasis for the volunteers who toiled there. He made benches where people could sit for lunch. He installed a drip irrigation system and planted trees on the embankment parallel to North Yard Track #4.

You can't spend much time in the yard with your eyes open that you won't see something that Warren did or influenced. He was cheerful, positive, undeterred, an inspiration, and great story teller. We will remember him fondly and will miss him.

Steve Jones



E-COUPLING INFORMATION

Website: <http://www.ncry.org>

Email: To Join Members Email List, send an Email to: info@ncry.org

Twitter: [@toots4ncry](https://twitter.com/toots4ncry)

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/NilesCanyonRailway>

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/NilesCanyonRailRoad>



NILES CANYON RAILWAY

===== November Activities =====

November 7	1st Saturday	MOW building East - Mike Strider
November 7	1st Saturday	Special Train, 10:30 am and 1:30 pm, Sunol
November 8	2nd Sunday	Special Train, 10:30 am and 1:30 pm, Sunol
November 14	2nd Saturday	Board of Directors Meeting, 2:15 pm (Teleconference)
November 14	2nd Saturday	Special Train, 10:30 am and 1:30 pm, Sunol
November 15	3rd Sunday	Special Train, 10:30 am and 1:30 pm, Sunol
November 16 - 20	3rd Monday-Friday	Brush Cutting Blitz, 8:00 am, (Brightside) Steve Jones
November 28	4th Saturday	Brush Cutting, 8:00 am (Brightside) Steve Jones

Volunteer Report

Ed Best - Volunteer Coordinator

The following is a list of the people who volunteered supporting your railroad in September. All volunteer hours on projects related to the railroad during these restricted periods are eligible to be registered. Please send your hours to me by e-mail at volunteers@ncry.org. One member of a working group can send me the data for all members of the group. Meeting attendance by teleconference is reported to me by the Membership Secretary.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Henry Baum
Mike Strider
Jim Evans
Linda Stanley
Pat Stratton
Steve Barkkarie
Jim Stewart
Kent Hedberg
Gail Hedberg
Bob Pratt
Ed Best
Joe Scardino
Mark Miller
Mary Asturias
Paul Veltman
Rich Alexander
Steve Jones

ARCHIVES & LIBRARY

Brian Hitchcock

CAR DEPARTMENT

Bob Moore
Dee Murphy
Denis Murchison
Dennis Mann
Howard Wise
Jim McDaniel
Marshall Williams
Pete Goodier
Phil Stone
Steve Van Meter

CAR DEPARTMENT

Terry Stokes
Tom Crawford

DEPOT CREW & OPERATIONS

Bob Bailey
Donna Alexander
Glenn Fountain
Rich Alexander

DOCENTS

Chris Hamilton
Dave Hipple
Ed Best
Henry Baum
Jacques Verdier
Jim Evans
Jim McDaniel
Rob Giles
Zonker Harris

ELECTRICAL & SIGNALS

Curt Hoppins
Jim Stewart
Rich Alexander

FACILITIES

Jack Harrington
John Zielinski
Rich Alexander
Steve Barkkarie
Steve Coon
Steve Jones

FACILITIES

Wesley Van Osdol

GIFT SHOP

Donna Alexander
Gail Hedberg

MECHANICAL

Alan Siegwath
Bill Ross
Bob Bailey
Charles Franz
Chris Hauf
Chuck Kent
Dee Murphy
Gerald DeWitt
Gerry Feeney
Howard Wise
Jeff Haslam
Jeff Schwab
Justin Legg
Karl Swartz
Kurt Olsen
Matthew Petach
Rich Anderson
Steve Coon
Whitney Haist

MEETINGS

Bill Strahle
Charles Gullo
Charles Navarra
Charles Smith

MEETINGS

Dan Sarka
Dave Burla
Dave Ernest
Dave Hipple
Dee Murphy
Dexter Day
Donna Alexander
Ed Best
Gail Hedberg
Henry Baum
Jason Kazarian
Jeff Haslam
Jim Evans
Jim Gilmore
Jim Stewart
Justin Legg
Karen Kadaja
Kent Hedberg
Leslie Smith
Linda Stanley
Lou Bradas
Marshall Williams
Matthew Petach
Mike Strider
Pat Buder
Pat Stratton
Paul Veltman
Peter Midnight
Rich Alexander
Roger McCluney
Rosanne Strahle
Steve Barkkarie
Steve Slabach

MEETINGS

Tim Flippo
Tom Eikerenkotter
Zona Fowler
Zonker Harris

MOW & TRACK

Adam Weidenbach
Bob Pratt
Dee Murphy
Doug Vanderlee
John Zielinski
Ken Southwick
Linda Stanley
Mark Whitman
Matthew Petach
Mike Strider
Pat Hafey
Pat Stratton
Peter Savoy
Rhonda Dijeau
Ron Thomas
Steve Barkkarie
Steve Jones

OTHER

Barry Lependorf
Bill Ross
Bob Bailey
Chris Hauf
Dennis Mann
Ed Best
Gerald DeWitt

OTHER

Gerry Feeney
Howard Wise
John Abatecola
Justin Legg
Mark Miller
Matthew Petach
Mike Strider
Patrice Warren
Steve Barkkarie
Steve Slabach
Zonker Harris

SWITCHING CREW

Ed Best
Mark Miller

TRAIN CREW

Alan Siegwath
Bob Pratt
Charles Franz
Chris Chisom
Chuck Kent
Derek Schipper
Jeff Schwab
John Sutkus
Jon Williamson
Jordan Hamilton
Kurt Olsen
Mark Miller
Ron Quilici
Ted Unruh
Warren Haack
Zonker Harris

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

President's Message

Henry Baum - President

Luck. It is a good thing to have. Luckily, with the railroad reopening and operating only County-sanctioned special event train rides and charters, we are seeing some income being generated. This income is greatly needed and will keep us solvent during these troublesome times.

This entire Covid-19 situation slammed down on us at a time that turned out to be extremely lucky for us, shutting us down in the middle of March when we had just begun spending our Train of Lights income. We were able to pump the brakes on spending to preserve our funds as we had no idea what the future would bring. If the pandemic had waited until September to hit, we would have already spent most of the TOL money, and we would have been in trouble.

I was always optimistic that we would be able to run Train of Lights this year, in some form, but the pandemic proved much more resilient to being eradicated than anyone thought. We channeled our spending to only cover our monthly expenses and preserve as much capital as we could. Usually, our train operations throughout the year go a long way toward bringing in enough income to cover our monthly expenses. That leaves the TOL income to be used to further our mission statement and perform the tasks that make our museum the first-class operation it is. With virtually no income from Train Operations between March and August, and far less than normal income from the few trains we can run, we would have to use the TOL income to carry us through the rest of the 2019-2020 fiscal year, and the 2020-2021 fiscal year that began in July.

Luckily, the 2019 Train of Lights was our most successful ever. I want to point out that everyone who contributed to making it so successful should feel proud that their efforts actually went beyond the norm, and effectively saved the day for the whole organization. We

didn't know how important TOL would be for us at the time. We always count on the income it generates, but we never have needed it to salvage an entire year. I'll say it again: Without the efforts of our volunteers who made TOL so successful, the organization would be in dire financial straits.

Our Treasurer Pat Stratton sharpened his #2 pencils to a razor point, and has put together a budget that will get us through the next fiscal year but luckily will also cover us until the 2021 Train of Lights money starts being realized in October 2021. That is a long way from now, and still nobody knows what the future will hold. While it is counting on income from train operations based on what we currently are able to put out for the public. It also allows us to move some projects forward that rely heavily on volunteer manpower, such as the Ranch Car restoration. The Happy Valley Bridge refurbishing though will be suspended. Mike Strider and the MOW team are looking at alternatives that will allow us to continue to build Eastward and come back to refurbish the bridge sometime down the line. That means extra work and extra costs, but sometimes those tradeoffs are in the best interests of the organization.

Late in 2019 we assumed we would be in a great financial position throughout 2020, so the Board made some decisions that would go a long way in improving our overall position as an operating Railroad Museum. We decided to spend the money to have a water well drilled in Brightside that would meet our water needs forever. We would no longer need to rely on purchased water from our Sunol taps. We also bid on and completed the purchase of the SP1744, the perfect steam locomotive for our Operations (although not in running condition, it was deemed an excellent candidate as it was partially restored and in really good shape).

Luckily, the PLA Endowment was also having a banner year, so instead

of drawing on our hard-earned TOL dollars, we planned to use the disburseable income available to us from the Endowment (basically, the income the endowment investments generates, not the principal) to fund these major expenses. When the pandemic hit, the Endowment, like all investments, took a significant hit, which reduces the amount available for disbursement. Luckily, by the time we needed to pay these big-ticket bills, the market had rebounded enough to cover the expenses.

I am sorry to say a number of other museums and excursion railroads were not as lucky as we have been. They have had to furlough employees, and in some cases, shut down for good. I have not seen a lot of equipment become available due to these shutdowns, but it will inevitably happen. Maybe we will be able to help some organization out by taking donations from them, but due to costs of transportation, it will need to be undertaken with great oversight and prudence.

While not truly a Covid-19 generated deaccession, the PLA was offered a 'dilapidated Cattle Car' from the Sonoma Valley Historical Society and the City of Sonoma. The car sits with a caboose and a boxcar in front of their museum located in the old Sonoma Depot. The cars block the view from the street and that invites loitering and vandalism by the youth in Sonoma. Donating the car will allow them to separate the box car and the caboose and allow the front of the depot to be observed. Dennis Mann and Doug Vanderlee visited the museum in Sonoma and determined that the car was in particularly good shape for having sat out in the sun for who knows how many years. We investigated the costs of relocating the car, and again, luckily, we were able to use disburseable Endowment funds to pay for the move. The car should be on property by the time you read this.

I loved that they used the term 'di-

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

President's Message

Henry Baum - President

lapidated' for this 'Stock' Car. I believe 'stock' cars were almost always homemade by the owning railroad out of old box cars that were past their prime. Even when 'newly' built, they were rarely pretty. Once they had carried a load of livestock, they began to look and smell even worse. Not pretty, but very lucrative for the railroads. We have been on the lookout for a good 'stock' car for some time. We are also still looking for a good sugar beet car. I would love to get my hands on some life-sized fiberglass cows to carry in this car (and maybe some fiberglass sheep or pigs).

To date I have been contacted by only one person who has private property at Brightside. The handshake agreements that have existed in the past are no longer adequate for an organization of our size and stature. We will need to have written agreements that will substantiate the benefit PLA derives from having these items on property and identify any items that do not benefit the PLA, which will then need to be removed. Privately owned items that are on property will be readily identifiable as such and their ability to be used as needed by PLA volunteers. Items remaining on property and not so identified by the end of this calendar year will be regarded as a donation and become PLA property. If you have property on PLA property, please ensure that you

contact me so we can work out a written agreement for that material. Your other choice is to remove it.

It is still vitally important that you notify Ed Best at volunteers@ncry.org to record your hours worked, what you worked on, and where you were working. This will allow us to do any necessary contact tracing should the need arise. Some volunteers are not doing

that, and that is a problem for the organization if we are called to show our records.

As always, if you would like to discuss any topic in further detail, please contact me by phone at 925.447.7358 or by email at president@ncry.org.

Respectfully submitted

Henry Baum



Photo by Don Buchholz

#7 on a runaround at Sunol Station.

Thinking of Volunteering? Department Contacts are listed below:

BRUSH CUTTING - Clearing the RoW of bushes and trees - Steve Jones - fccompost@aol.com
CAR MAINTENANCE - Maintenance and repair - Tom Crawford - tom@thecrawfordfamily.net
COMMISSARY - Food service on the trains - Bob Bradley - ncry.commissary@gmail.com
GIFT SHOP - Work in the Sunol Gift Shop - Gail Hedberg - giftshop@ncry.org
MOW CREW - (WEDNESDAY) - Work on track repair, etc. - Ron Thomas - rsthomas@sbcglobal.net
MOW CREW - (SATURDAY) - Work on building track East. Michael Strider - mstrider67@gmail.com
SIGNALS - Install/Maintain signal systems - Curt Hoppins - curt@ncrysignal.com
NILES STATION - Work parking, ticket sales, set-up, etc. - John Fenstermacher - johnnsherif@aol.com
SUNOL STATION - Work parking, ticket sales, set-up, etc. - Donna Alexander - station-agent@ncry.org
STEAM DEPARTMENT - Work in all aspects of steam engines - Alan Siegwarth - siegy667@hotmail.com
STEAM HOSTLER TRAINING - Prepare a steam locomotive for service - Jeff Schwab - jeffs@levinterminal.com

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Along the Right of Way

Stephen Barkkarie - General Manager

November is here and in any other year the Niles Canyon Railway would be a very busy place. Although that is not the case this year, I think we still have many reasons to be thankful. We have been able to open to the public with several very successful test run weekends and charters. We have been able to budget our resources in a way that should get us past the winter thanks to the generous donations of time and materials by our volunteers and supporters. For the most part, we have avoided the effects of the COVID on the health of our members and passengers. Through it all, we have been able to make some excellent additions to our collection. This is a testament to the strength and resilience of our organization to overcome whatever comes our way.

In the last month work continued in Brightside on car restorations. The All Day Lunch, the 2101, the Ranch, the Diner, the Gothic Peak, the UP Hopper and the Bones all have been tended to some degree. Our people have done everything from window repair, painting, brake testing and repair, mechanical restoration of car body and return to function of hopper doors. We have completed the replacement of brake hoses on every piece of equipment in the collection with the exception of a few special sizes for locomotives and multi-car units that will be ordered soon. Next step will be to use the old hoses to rebuild the Ballast Regulator broom.

Our motive fleet is also getting some attention. Gerry Feeney and Ed Best are working on air leaks in the 918 with mixed results. As usual, you fix one leak and find another. That is the way of things, but with perseverance you achieve success. Case in point continued testing and inspection has located the grounding problem that has plagued the WP713 generator replacement. Our intrepid mechanical contrac-

tor Matt Munson, with the enlisted help of a retired SP electrician, was finally able to locate a traction motor cable that had worn through its insulation and caused the problem. With that fixed we are ready to button up the hood and return this valuable locomotive to service. Way to go PLA. It took some time, but we pulled off a major repair in house and on budget.

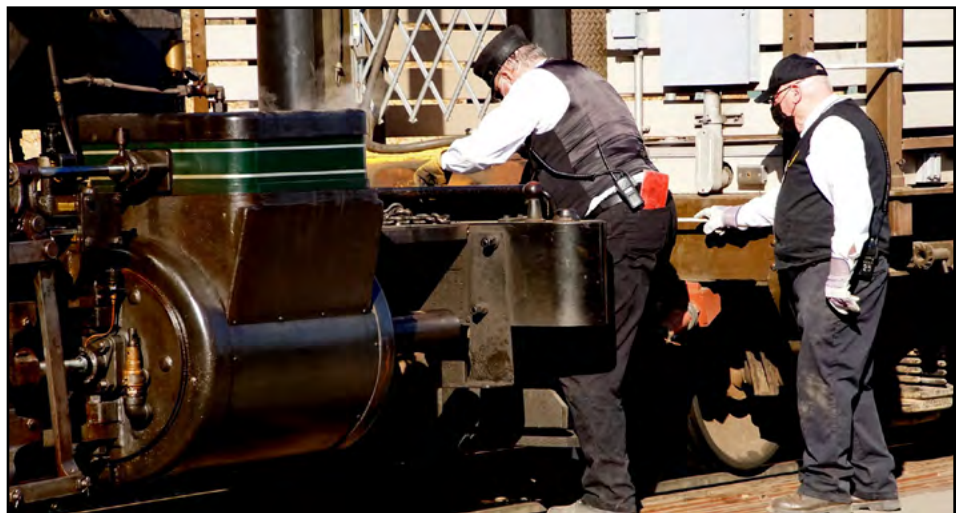
MOW has been busy each week with yard improvements, like a new break area for crews outside Blake's Palace, continuation of the walkway improvement on the mainline and clean up in the area between Signals containers to prepare a space to bring home our M601 rail bus. Another job is responding to problems reported by train crew. For instance, a jumping point on the Engine House 1 turnout was dealt with by profile jacking, tamping of the heel blocks and closing rails, and tie replacement. This is a job we normally contract out, however with a little practice like this we can perform in-house and save money. Our people showed they have what it takes to do this kind of work. We have had to reset switch stands that have loosened and lubed up our spring frog turnouts. Track crews are also checking culverts and

ditches in preparation for the rainy season. We are back to extending our line to the East placing panels and screening ballast.

PLA has received donations of materials for upcoming projects from Track Services, Inc. (Peter Schulze) in the form of short lengths of rail, perfect for retaining walls like the one we need to make room for a second MOW tool container. Also, Union Pacific has agreed to donate a large number of concrete crossing panels (around 100 pieces both gauge and field sized) from their Shinn street yard. We just need to go and get them. These will have a bunch of uses in future projects. Whitney Haist, Henry Chandler and I went into a three way split on purchasing a gas powered pressure washer/steam cleaner for the Association. It is a very nice unit we got at a great price.

Despite a very strange year, things look really good for the PLA. When we get past this virus threat, we have all the pieces in place to come rolling back strong as ever. I for one am looking forward to the day when I can see your smiling face again. (Without the need for a mask!)

Stephen Barkkarie



Brakeman training in coupling/uncoupling.

Photo by Don Buchholz

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Membership Report

Linda Stanley - Membership Secretary

In considering the passing of long-time volunteer Warren Benner, I feel the best legacy gift I could give to honor his memory is to speak on apprenticeship. Warren was a tradesman who worked in the auto industry and then applied the principles learned over a career of working with his hands to help the PLA/NCRy in its mission to salvage and restore vintage railroad equipment for its operational use. As Warren's fellow volunteer Carlo Borlandelli recalls, Warren was the 'spark' who saw the need and jumped in to fill it.

Whenever someone of Warren's stature is lost to the PLA, a void is created that yearns to be filled by the next generation of volunteers. This may be getting increasingly more difficult to do, due to the higher tech nature of today's workplace, but hopefully experiencing the joy of working with one's hands alongside like-minded volunteers will never go out of style.

Since the pandemic shutdown of the NCRy in March 2020 and its measured reopening since, it has been gratifying to see invaluable volunteers needed to 'make it happen' around the NCRy returning and signing up to help where needed. When they do, they see their safety is first and foremost in everything the PLA/NCRy does. By getting out of the house and experiencing the clean, fresh air of beautiful Niles Canyon once again they help to fill the gaps that are so sorely needed for our volunteers to fill.

Members like Warren – irrepressible and eager to help – are not the NCRy's past, but a pattern to emulate for its future. Until the PLA is allowed to operate under completely normal conditions once again, it must operate wisely and with a plan and purpose, but balance that to allow the freedom for our volunteers to feel their own sense of self purpose. To wrap it up – few members most likely come out to volunteer feeling the need to be a mentor to the next generation of volunteers, but if those of

us who have the skill don't do it, who will? No one is born with the knowledge of the trades – it must be learned through doing via apprenticeship from the journeyman coming before. Warren lived it, practiced it, and will be honored by the legacy left when a railcar he had a hand in restoring or helping to create rolls by on the rails on the NCRy.

Those who may have the opportunity to experience the joys of volunteering and membership are 18 new or returning members: Nick, Christin, Diego Zamora and Liam O'Leary, Barbara Sacks, Bob Zacher, Joseph Smith, the Watson family of Shaun, Erica, Eli and Isaac, Al Rizzo, Anne and Haralambos

along with John, Calista and Jack Pettit and new Life Member Doc Bailey.

As of this writing, Alameda County is allowing the NCRy to open up a bit more and it is hoped that soon in-person membership meetings can take place once again. Voting member hopefuls Kurt Olsen, Justin Legg and Steve Coon will either be voted into voting member status at this in-person membership meeting or if prevented from doing so the vote will take place via US Mail - stay tuned for further developments!

Sign up to volunteer, or to mentor a volunteer - you'll be glad you did!

Linda Stanley



The poster features a green background with a border of colorful Christmas lights. At the top, the text "Niles Canyon Railway's 2020 Train of Lights" is written in a yellow, stylized font, with a Santa hat icon to the left. Below this is a photograph of a train car decorated with lights, reflecting in a body of water. The word "CANCELLED" is written in large, bold, yellow capital letters. Below that, "DUE TO COVID-19" and "RESTRICTIONS" are also in large, bold, yellow capital letters. At the bottom, there is a circular logo for the Niles Canyon Railway, the website "NCRy.org", and the phone number "510-996-8420". To the right of the phone number, it says "An operating railroad museum".

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Photographers Special - Ride the 7 for the 1744!



Photo by Chris Hauf

The #7 Skookum freight train.

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there will also be opportunities to work with the conductor to stage other shots as the group desires. Halfway through the day, a box lunch will be served while the locomotive is turned for west-bound runby's for the remainder of the day. Return to Sunol and tie up to be around 4:30 pm.

The trip will also include a stop at the Brightside Steam Shop for a tour of the SP 1744, and an overview of the restoration effort by the project managers. They will detail the restoration and how funds will be used to return this artifact

to operating service.

Safety is every railroad's first priority! The NCRy is no exception, and tickets will be limited to ensure the chase train capacity is well below 50% capacity with an added open-air car, hand sanitizer, and restrooms onboard. Photo lines will be spread out to ensure social distancing, and masks will be required. To ensure authenticity, however, the train and engine crews on the photo freight train will not be masked during runby's and will maintain separation from ticket holders and the chase train crew.

Please bring camera equipment, closed toed shoes, a mask, water bottle, dress for inclement weather, a positive attitude, and anything else needed to help you enjoy a full day of exciting period railroad action.

Please note: This is a serious railfan photographer's trip with the train being out the entire day, passengers debarking and reboarding multiple times in remote areas with uncertain footing, exposed to weather and natural hazards in Niles Canyon. This trip is not recommended for young children.

Alan Siegwarth

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Initial Work on the SP #1744

In between the last few months of operations and the associated repairs on the Skookum, the steam crew was able to spend a day working on the SP #1744. The crew spent most of the day moving parts out of containers, organizing and laying out the rods in one of the containers. The container is now set up to be our "1744 shop" and we will start measuring all the rods pins and bearings to help determine the condition of the running gear.

The steam crew wants to thank everyone who has donated toward the SP #1744 project so far as donations are essential to allow the SP #1744 project to continue moving forward. If you can, PLEASE DONATE to keep the project on schedule! Donations can be mailed, made online at www.ncry.org or on our Steam Website page at <http://plasteam.ncry.org> which you can also visit to keep up with the progress of the restoration. Thank you for your support of this important restoration project!

Alan Siegwarth

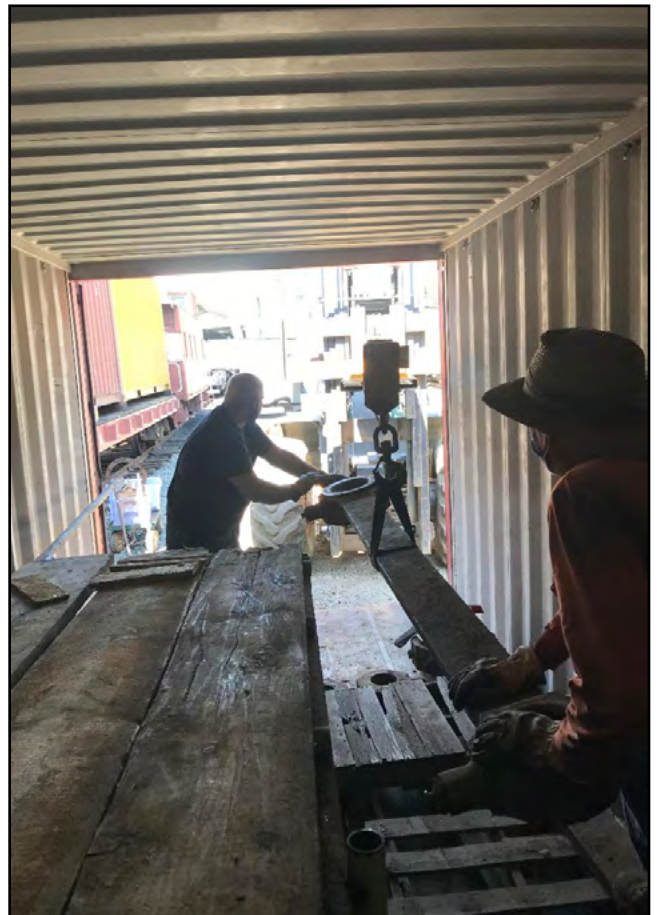


Photos by Alan Siegwarth

ABOVE:
Gerald DeWitt and Charles Franz unloading a container of 1744 parts from Colorado.

RIGHT:
Chuck Kent and Gerald DeWitt move a side rod around in the container with a little help from the forklift.

LEFT:
The rods all laid out in the container ready for measurement. Notice the superheater units in the rack that makes a nice table for several of the rods. These units will be eventually pressure tested and reinstalled in the boiler.



NILES CANYON RAILWAY

9 Days of Steam – Steam Operations Return to the NCRy

The last three months have been a learning experience for PLA operating trains in the new normal of the COVID era. Surprisingly, our first operation since March turned out to be a steam wedding charter exactly five months to the day on August 15th. In preparation, the Steam Department spent a lot of time inspecting the Skookum, making repairs, taking the tank car to Sunol for water and many other small jobs that are required. In the meantime, PLA was given permission to begin operating again by Alameda County Department of Health and the organization requested that the operations be all steam.

As with any project at the NCRy, the operations wouldn't get done without volunteers so the Steam Department had a Zoom meeting to discuss how we could safely fire up and operate steam on a regular basis. One issue we had was who would be comfortable helping with the vagaries of the COVID situation. A plan was developed that everyone was comfortable with and we started operating Saturday and Sunday two weekends a month in September and October. As usual, the Skookum kept us busy fixing issues in between operations but overall she is turning out to be a good running locomotive. The hot temperatures and smoke from the many fires in California made some of the operating days really uncomfortable for the crews but everyone persevered and the sold out trains were all operated successfully.

The operations also gave the steam crew the opportunity to do some training with Gerald DeWitt getting running hours training as a Steam Engineer. The shorter five car train being pulled allowed one locomotive operation with a run around at each end which had the added benefit of giving our train crews training in coupling/uncoupling at Sunol and Niles. This started out rough but became a smooth process after a few weeks of practice and was a good education in railroad operations for all!

Alan Siegwarth



Photo by Alan Siegwarth

Passengers taking great interest in watching the Skookum couple into the west end of the train before leaving for Niles.



Photo by Alan Siegwarth

Gerald DeWitt - EIT, Engineer in Training.



Photo by Alan Siegwarth

Skookum taking water on the siding in Sunol.

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Brush Cutting Report

Steve Jones - Sawdust Manager

Events conspired to prevent us from doing any brush cutting on the ROW since last month's report; so ROW Vegetation: 1 / Jonesey: 0.

There is woodchip excitement on the horizon, however. Chris Boza will once again traipse South from Washington State to lead a one week long, 5-day Brush Cutting Blitz in the canyon

from Monday, November 16th, through Friday, November 20th. This will be the third time we have initiated one of these week-long marathon brush cutting adventures. As the dates draw nearer, I will be publishing invitations via the PLA Members E-mail list to join the gang for one or more days during the week. When we work 5 uninter-

rupted days in a row, we make serious progress in our battle against right-of-way encroachment and sightline interference.

Until next time,
Arborerros!! Aaawwwaaaaaayyyy!!

Steve Jones

Treasurer's Report

Pat Stratton - Treasurer

Good news, fellow Volunteers, we are running trains again! Our first two weekends in September (4 trains each weekend, all with steam) grossed \$22,180. Along with gift shop sales and donated money and supplies, we had a total income of \$45,941 for September. We are looking ahead for charters, possibly in support of Casa Bella in Sunol. And we should be thinking about Special Trains, like Beer Trains and other events, planning for early next year. The kind of events that are exciting and memorable for our riders.

Expenses for train operations, main-

tenance and repairs, facilities upkeep, MOW, and Administrative expenses totaled \$29,404. We also had restoration costs of \$25,343 to bring the SP1744 frame home to Brightside, and \$1,463 for work on the Ranch Car.

Less the restoration costs, that means we had a net positive income, with revenue of \$45,941 less \$29,404 expenses equal to \$16,357 in excess of our operating expenses. It is this excess, plus other donations, that goes to pay for our restoration work.

A great job everyone, finding a successful way to make our riders comfortable in these virus times. And thanks to all those who are making donations of cash and materials, in the amount of \$18,437 in September, and of course their time. It all comes together to allow us to continue to put up an operating schedule of trains, and to continue our maintenance and restoration works. Our Volunteers are hard at work on every Wednesday, and many other days, keeping our track up, making ROW improvements, repairing cars (ADL 1975 and Coach 2101) and locomotives (WP713 and WP918), and working various restoration projects including the KM Diesel Hydraulic SP9010, the Ranch Car GN1242, and now the SP1744 steam locomotive. Be sure to contact someone if you want to get involved in any of these projects, we will

make sure you talk to the right people.

At the last Board meeting we approved the Budget for the rest of this fiscal year. If we can continue to operate like we did this month, with good earnings and controlled expenses, we will make it through this very lean fiscal year and into next year where we can work toward a successful TOL to get us back to normal.

Pat Stratton

treasurer@ncry.org
650-888-8619



TAX DEDUCTIBLE: The Pacific Locomotive Association is qualified under Internal Revenue Service code section 501 (c)(3) as a tax exempt organization. Thus, donations to the PLA are tax deductible as CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS to the extent allowed by law. Our mailing address is P.O. Box 515, Sunol, CA 94586-0515. The PLA's Federal ID is: 94-6130878, CA ID is: 0501445.

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager

This month's tale:

"THE PONDS OF BRIGHTSIDE"

It was the Spring of 2000 and the need to expand was really starting to press development of our Brightside facility. We had discussed many times getting the ponds of Brightside filled in and compacted to provide a base for rail-yard storage tracks. At that time, these conversations were no more than planning sessions. There was no way that we could afford to hire the equipment needed to accomplish the job of filling the ponds at Brightside.

FERMA Corporation owns the property above ours. I had met Larry Ferrari who is a partner with his brother and were in charge of FERMA. I had meetings in the past with Larry when it was discovered from a survey of our property at Brightside that we owned the property where FERMA's truck scales were located in their driveway, and half the driveway leading to HWY 84. The Southern Pacific Railroad never pressed the issue, but now it was under County control. Liability now came into play with the County.

A land swap took place and FERMA got the scales and the driveway back. We got the property from our tracks to the FERMA berm. We picked up property that we needed which is where the upper (White House) road is now. Our property now included Mt. Flippo (named for then PLA President, Tim Flippo). That land swap also came into play when it came to filling in the ponds.

Months later, I had some reason to call Larry Ferrari. At the end of our conversation, I asked if I could run something by him. If we paid labor, and costs, could FERMA write off the machines? He went along with that suggestion and the plan to fill the ponds was defined. We didn't know when all this was going to take place. Equipment availability was the important element in getting the ponds filled in.

There was lot to do in preparation



Photo by: Brian Wise

The ponds of Brightside as they sat in the beginning.

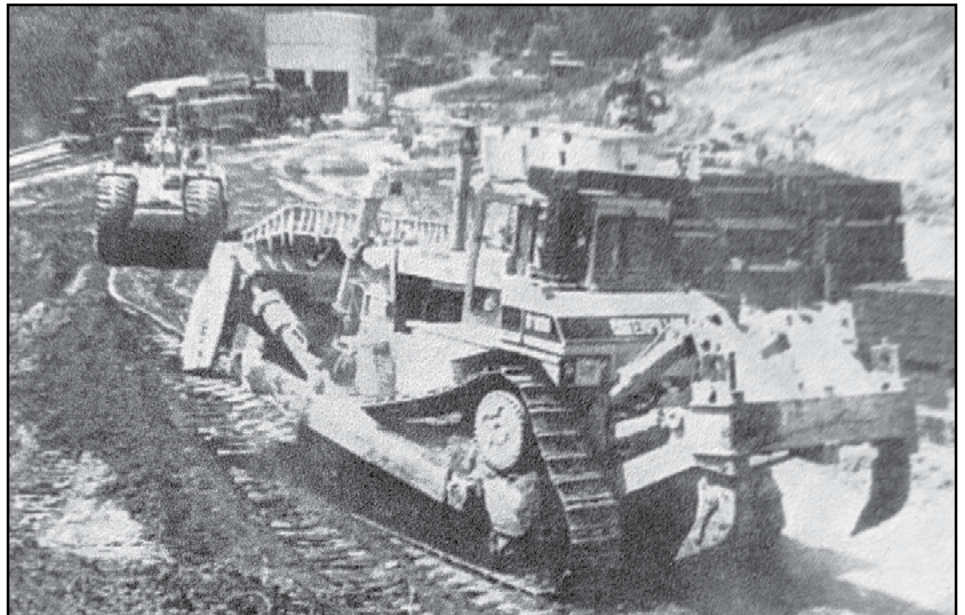


Photo by Jim Swofford

Atop Mt. Flippo, D-10 CAT prepares another load of fill. (Photo from old Club Car article.)

for this major undertaking. Some of the members at the time were Ed Alley, Ken Asmus, Ken Brunskill, Dave Burla, Gerry Dewees, and others. They needed to clear all the brush and move material out of the way for the upcoming attack on the ponds.

Then one afternoon, the call came in.

Larry said that they would be on property Monday, and it should take four days if all went well. If only he knew then what was going to happen. He also wanted to cut a road across the base of the FERMA berm to Mt. Flippo. That would be easier on the equipment instead of coming through the front

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager

gate. We said, "Good idea. Go for it."

Monday came and FERMA was on the move. Their Caterpillar D-10 bulldozer started in cutting in the new road. The D-10 Cat was followed by the road grader, earth mover, and a compactor. The attack on the ponds was on. We had no idea how it was going to turn out, but it was underway. The D-10 CAT shoved the dirt down from Mt. Flippo to the bottom of the hill where the earth mover scooped it up and took it to the pond hole and dropped the dirt. Then it was compacted by the compactor. After a day of operation, something was wrong. They were not getting the expected results. The problem? Well, they found out that the dirt from Mt. Flippo was compacting at 98 percent which is good for a railroad yard. That meant that it would take more dirt and more trips with the earth mover to accomplish the fill and more time to the job. Cost to us did go up.

We did save money when the East Bay Chapter of the California Land Surveyors Association helped us out. A team of volunteer surveyors did the leveling of the yard and placed stakes for the grading. They did a great job for us.

Larry told me I had to be very careful with the level on this yard. The water runoff would cause trouble and I needed a drainage plan to be established



Photo by: Jim Swofford

Chief Engineer Mike Strider talks over survey with Bob while grader puts on final touches.

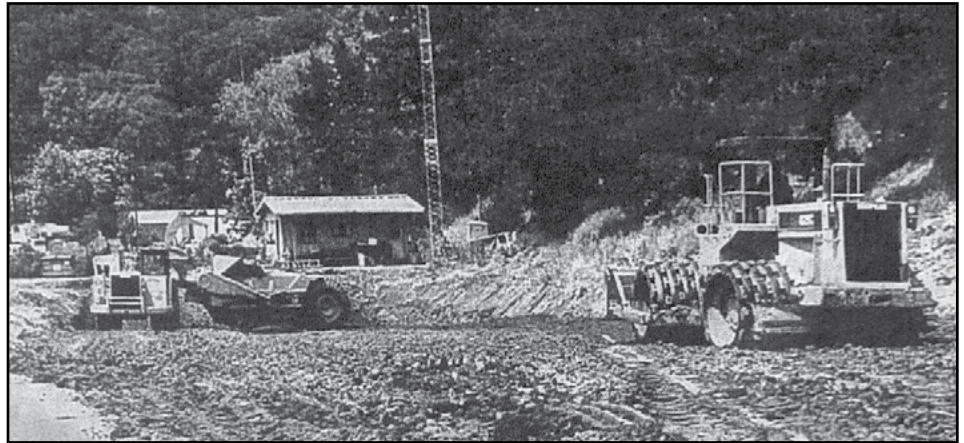


Photo by: Jim Swofford

The ponds of Brightside getting smaller. (Photo from old Club Cars.)

soon. Well, a strange storm showed up and it rained. I have to say, Larry was right on the mark with his statement about getting a drainage plan for this place. When the rains stopped, Lake Dexter was formed. It was on and around our Brightside compound road. The next morning the attack to fill the ponds continued in mud and soft dirt. The earth mover got stuck in the soft dirt and needed assistance from the D-10 Cat. The four days expanded into seven days. When the road grader was finally done grading and putting the finishing touches to the place, we had a level surface for a railyard.

At the time, you also could say that Sunol had a new airport. We just witnessed how the SEABEES built airfields on Pacific Islands where there was nothing there to start with. The two big ponds of Brightside were now filled in, and we could start planning construction of the Brightside Yard. Putting in Yard Track One would help in the control of the water runoff. It wouldn't be until the Spring and Summer of 2003 when the main drain would be completed and water run off was under control. The water runoff was to go into the last open pond. That pond needs to be cleaned out every three years so it can hold the volume of water that it is expected to receive.

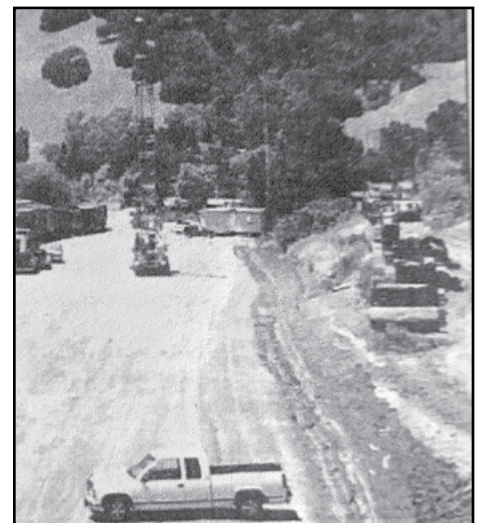


Photo by Jim Swofford

The area filled in waiting finishing touches to the area. (Photo from old Club Car.)

If it weren't for Larry Ferrari and the FERMA Corporation, those ponds would have gone a long time before getting filled in. FERMA Corporation moved all the heavy equipment off their property shortly after completing filling in the ponds of Brightside.

You know, sometimes you just get lucky!!

With that said, ANOTHER TALE ENDS.

Dexter Day

NILES CANYON RAILWAY



**FALL
CLEARANCE
BLOWOUT
SUPER SALE**

OVER STOCK & DISCONTINUED ITEMS

Visit On-Line Gift Shop: ncry.clubexpress.com
Members and Non-Members can view a variety of books, caps, DVD's, pins, ornaments, and toys
Store Categories: select descriptions
Specials: DVD's and Books
Search products: select <any categories> leave other fields blank * click Search



Our main Gift Shop remains closed to the public because of pandemic restrictions. We are offering a new option to passengers using our on-line ticketing reservation system to introduce our Club Express on-line Gift Shop. This gives an opportunity to browse and purchase from home railfan items for all ages through the NCRy Online Gift Store. The test program started in September, and to date, the on-line sales with will-call pick up at the Sunol Depot, have been a success. This addition to our re-opening plan enhances the NCRy experience while keeping our passengers and volunteers safe.

To help with fundraising, Donna Alexander our Chief Station Agent will schedule appointment-only opportunities for PLA members for in-person holiday shopping and Will Call pick-up at our Sunol Depot Gift Shop. Our Covid 19 health and safety plan requires wearing masks, social distancing and includes accommodating one in-person shopper at a time during the pandemic. The store is cashless and can accept credit card transactions.

One of our members, John Abatecola from TSG Multimedia has graciously donated a large quantity DVD titles about NCRy steam to raise money for

the PLA. Each of his three specially priced \$12.95 DVD productions' with details and descriptions are listed in the on-line store. Income from selling these items and other Gift Shop purchases directly supports our reopening plan.

If you are interested, please visit the member's website; ncry.clubexpress.com and click Gift Store. Note that shipping is not an option but arranging in person Will Call pick-up for items with the Chief Station Agent is preferred. For questions, please contact giftshop@ncry.org

Gail Hedberg

MEETINGS

Most General Meetings take place at Sunol Glen School in Sunol.

Meetings are held in January, March, May, June, July, and October, but can be subject to cancellation.

Board of Directors Meeting

**Saturday
November 14
2:15 pm**

=== NEW TIME ===
teleconferencing service

Membership Meeting

**NO MEETING
SCHEDULED**

CLUB CAR DEADLINE

The deadline for submitting articles and photos for next month's issue of The Club Car is the **20th OF THIS MONTH!** Submitting articles is easy by e-mail in Word text format.

Send e-mail to:

clubcar@ncry.org

Digital photos may also be submitted by e-mail. Electronic images should be saved as PC format .jpg files with minimal compression (i.e., average to excellent quality). A text file with the photo number, description of photo and identifying the people in them **IS REQUIRED**.

The editor reserves the right to hold or edit material as necessary.

BOARDING LOCATIONS

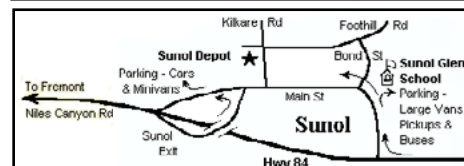
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General Meetings are held on the 3rd Friday of January, May & July at 7:30 p.m. and the 3rd Saturday of March, June & October at 3:30 pm at the Sunol Glen School, two blocks east of the Depot on Main Street in Sunol, CA. Members, Sponsors & Guests are welcome.

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The Pacific Locomotive Association is a member of the HeritageRail Alliance (HRA).

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The #4 pulling freight across the Farwell Bridge.

Photo by Chris Hauf